



Penny Bernard Schaber

STATE REPRESENTATIVE 57th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Serving the heart of Appleton

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Rep. Bernard Schaber Introduces Bill to Increase Transparency in Political Ads

AB 378 requires ads to provide phone # or website address

MADISON- State Rep. Penny Bernard Schaber (D-Appleton) has introduced a bill related to the content and form of political ad disclosures. This bill was circulated for co-sponsorship in the Legislature in October and was assigned a bill number and referred to a committee today.

“Many constituents have come to me complaining about all of the negative ads on TV and radio. They tell me that they can’t even determine which group or organization is paying for them. The print on the TV screen is so small and flashes across the screen in a blur and the spoken disclosure on radio speaks a mile a minute in the disclosures, that it is impossible to tell who sponsored the ad.”

The current disclosure rules make it very difficult for the public to read or hear and to understand who is actually sponsoring and paying for political ads. This bill resolves these issues, by requiring that ads provide a phone # or a website address that people can use to get in contact with the organization. Additionally, this bill requires the disclosure message at the beginning and end of a radio message and to be placed on the TV screen throughout the duration of the ad.

“I’ve heard from colleagues on both sides of the aisle and from constituents saying that it is nearly impossible to tell who is actually running all of these political ads. If you aren’t wearing your glasses or you’re not sitting 3 feet from the TV screen, it’s nearly impossible to read the disclosure. If you’re across the room or listening to the radio in the background, when the ad comes on, you have to rush over and stick your ear right up to the speaker to understand what the disclosure message says.”

This bill gives citizens of Wisconsin the ability to know who is running political ads and the necessary information for finding out about the group or organization responsible. Overall, this bill will help improve the disclosure and transparency of the political ad process.

AB 378 has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Election and Campaign Reform and I hope that this committee will take up this bill to help bring transparency to political ads in Wisconsin.

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